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THE HAGUE, PLEASE PASS TO RJONES AND WKASTEN, IPSLO ROTTERDAM
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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: ROMANIA: NO SURPRISES ON ISPS PRE-INSPECTION VISIT

REF: BUCHAREST 796

Sensitive but Unclassified, Not for Internet Distribution.

¶1. (SBU) Summary. EconOff visited ports in Constanta and Galati together with visiting International Port Security Liaison Officers, LtCmdrs Radiah Jones and William Kasten, who were in Romania for an orientation visit between October 6th and 10th. Both ports are busy and profitable, with Constanta already preparing for the future through additional expansions. Galati is also ready to respond if the Danube River starts to become a major transportation artery. The visit revealed no major deficiencies at any of the visited port facilities with regard to the International Ship and Port Security (ISPS) code. On a working level, law enforcement cooperation is taking place among the Black Sea littoral states. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) In Constanta, meetings were held with the Romanian Naval Authority and Constantza Port. Constantza Port is a government owned, but independently operated, port. With 178 berths, it is the largest container hub on the Black Sea and had a throughput of 57.8 million tons in 2007. It is also on track to expand further, with additional berths opening up to the south of the main port. At the time of the visit, several ships were anchored just off shore waiting for berths. According to the Harbor Master, current capacity constraints sometimes necessitate waits of up to 72 hours. The port itself has facilities to accommodate both passengers and cargo, and the port operators were pleased to show off their new state-of-the-art passenger terminal. Other facilities in Constanta include Midia Port, 25 km to the north and Mangalia located 38 km to the south. Mangalia services small boats (up to 10,000 DWT) and pleasure craft, while Midia primarily services the nearby Rompetrol Petrochemicals facility. Our interlocutors emphasized that an expanded South Port is necessary to accommodate the future expected growth of the port, which is already one of the largest in Europe.

¶3. (SBU) In Galati, the team visited Romportmet, a facility owned by Arcelor Mittal, which imports and exports materials for the Arcelor Mittal plant in Galati. Several barges were lined up on the Danube River, offloading coal and ore, while steel plates and rolled steel were waiting to be exported. Surprisingly, one barge contained coal imported from the U.S., as the quality of this coal is seen as much higher than that available from other countries in the region, and is crucial for the formation of certain types of high quality steel. According to the Harbor Master, Galati as well as the subordinate ports of Braila and Tulcea, are ready to expand, if necessary, to accommodate increased traffic on the Danube. Already an active shipment point, there are 122 berths scattered among the three facilities. The ports also host rail connections, storage facilities, grain silos, cereal terminals, a container terminal, a passenger terminal, and an oil terminal. All three ports receive and inspect international cargo destined for both

Romania and other parts of the EU. If the Danube River becomes an increasingly important shipment route through Romania (reftel), Galati will have an expanded role to play in managing cargo passing between the Danube and the Black Sea.

¶4. (SBU) The Border Guards play an integral role in both ports, functioning as the equivalent of both U.S. Border Patrol and the Coast Guard. They inspect vessels in both ports, in conjunction with the Customs Service and Veterinary Service. In connection with the Romanian Navy, the Border Guards have an active surveillance system in place at both Ports, and they would be the de facto lead agency in responding to a threat at either port. At this time, the main concerns are illegal migration and interdicting contraband, such as illegal cigarettes. At the time of the visit to Constanta, a naval officer was temporarily posted in the Border Guard's Command center, where he was training Border Guards on how to access and use the various military sensors deployed around the port. From the command center, the Border Guards also have direct access to a database which allows law enforcement information sharing among the Black Sea Littoral states. In response to EconOff's question, the Border Guards indicated that they work closely with Ukraine, Turkey, Georgia, Russia, and Bulgaria on maritime issues, especially those dealing with law enforcement cooperation. Particularly surprising was their mention of regular joint operations with Ukraine, which are taking place despite the ongoing border delimitation dispute between the two countries.

¶5. (SBU) Comment. The port operators in both Constanta and Galati appear professional, and both ports are growing and profitable. On paper, port security plans are in place and both the Ministry of Transport and the various port authorities appeared eager to cooperate with the ISPS program. However, the coordination mechanisms have never been put to the test, and there are sometimes

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unclear lines of authority as to who would actually coordinate the response to a major security incident in a Romanian maritime port, a subject that the next inspection team may wish to explore further. On a positive note, officials at both ports recognize the importance of the Black Sea, and that cooperation among the littoral states makes sense, both as a business, and as a means to ensure regional security. End Comment.